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which, by sympathy, communicates its influence to the vital organs. The next form of death is that which is induced by such causes as are applied, in a sufficient degree, to act as direct sedatives to the organs of the sensitive system, that is, to impair their excitability without previous excitement. The third set of causes of death comprehends those which operate by depriving some of the vital organs of those stimulants on which their functions depend; and the last consists of such as directly debilitate those organs themselves. Thus, according to the author, these adventitious causes act either directly by destroying the power of the brain and spinal cord, or by affecting the vital parts of those organs, so as, through them, to destroy the circulation or the assimilatory functions. The destruction of the circulation appears, in all cases, to be the cause of instantaneous death, and always to be effected through impressions made on the vital parts of the brain and spinal cord, except where the injurious agent operates directly on the organs of circulation themselves.

The author considers the vital functions, together with the muscular and nervous powers, which carry them on, as the results of inanimate agents acting on living parts, or living parts on them; and hence he explains the analogy which exists between all these functions and the operations of inanimate nature; while, with regard to the sensorial functions alone, as they are the results of vital parts acting on each other, so no analogy can be perceived between them and those operations.

In the course of the paper the author frequently reverts to the argument, that, to the sentient being, death being simply the loss of sensibility, the last act of dying can in no case be an act of suffering: and in the majority of instances of the long continuance of disease, our tastes, and our relish for life itself, being gradually impaired, death is met, not only with composure, but even with satisfaction.

A paper was then read, entitled, "On the Tides." By John William Lubbock, Esq., V.P. and Treasurer of the Royal Society.

Various tables relating to the tides are communicated in this paper, calculated, according to the instructions of the author, by Mr. Dessiou. In the tables given by the author in former papers, already published in the *Philosophical Transactions*, and having reference to the corrections due to the influence of the parallax and declination of the moon, Mr. Dessiou employed only observations of the tides made between conjunction and opposition; but in those now given, similar corrections have been obtained from observations made between opposition and conjunction.

The author enters into an inquiry into the correction due to the calendar month, which is mixed up with that due to the moon's declination, and shows that the correction for the moon's parallax, as well as declination, deduced from the theory of Bernoulli, are quite discordant with the results of Mr. Dessiou's calculations, founded on actual observation.

The author agrees with Mr. Whewell in the remark, that the theory of the tides is now in the same state as that which the theory of the

motions of the moon and planets presented about a century ago ; and unless considerable exertions be made, it may so continue for many years to come. The tables of the planets have acquired their present accuracy only through the liberal encouragement of learned bodies, and of some of the governments of Europe ; nor can tables of the tides, adapted to the present state of science, be now constructed, unless very considerable expense be incurred, and immense labour bestowed.

The results of numerous observations on the influence of the wind on the tides in the River Thames, are stated ; and the author observes, that this is a subject of considerable importance as regards the accuracy of which tide predictions are susceptible.

The reading of a paper, entitled, " An Account of some Operations executed at Cape Frio, by the Officers and Crew of His Majesty's Ship *Algerine*, for the purpose of raising a part of the Stores, &c. lost in His Majesty's Ship *Thetis*." By the Hon. Commander F. T. de Roos, R.N., F.R.S.—was commenced.

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February 27, 1834.

FRANCIS BAILY, Esq., Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Hon. Commander de Roos's paper was resumed and concluded.

The author, who had the command of His Majesty's ship *Algerine*, was instructed to take charge of the enterprise commenced by the officers and crew of His Majesty's ship *Lightning*, having for its object the recovery of the treasure and stores from the wreck of the *Thetis*, which, in the month of December 1830, had sunk in a cove to the south-east of Cape Frio. He reached this spot on the 6th of March, 1832, having with him eleven officers and eighty-five men. A certain number of men were appointed to remain on board the ship, which was moored in a harbour two miles off ; a party of artificers and others were employed at the huts which they inhabited near the Cape ; and the rest, nearly thirty-five in number, were stationed at the wreck.

The author gives a description of Cape Frio, and of the island of which it forms the south-eastern extremity, and which is an immense promontory of insulated granite jutting into the Atlantic Ocean, sixty miles east of Rio de Janeiro. The cove, in the middle of which the wreck of the *Thetis* lay, is a square indenture in the cliffs, six hundred feet deep by as many wide. It is surrounded by nearly perpendicular masses of granite, from one hundred to two hundred feet high, and is exposed to the whole swell of the South Atlantic, which sets in with remarkable force in that direction. The weather is singularly variable ; and transitions frequently take place in the course of a few hours, from perfect stillness to the most tremendous swell. The author states that he has witnessed few scenes in nature more sublime than that presented by the *Thetis* Cove during a gale of wind from the south-west.